

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Digital Repository

Volume 16

Number 6 *The Iowa Homemaker* vol.16, no.6

Article 2

1936

Cooperation Transforms Work Into Play for the Coeds in Our Cooperative Halls

Helen Clark

Iowa State College

Charlotte Heffner

Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker>



Part of the [Home Economics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Clark, Helen and Heffner, Charlotte (1936) "Cooperation Transforms Work Into Play for the Coeds in Our Cooperative Halls," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 16 : No. 6 , Article 2.

Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol16/iss6/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

Cooperation Transforms Work Into Play for the Coeds in Our Cooperative Halls

By Helen Clark and Charlotte Heffner

UNLIKE Carrie Chapman Catt who washed dishes for nine cents an hour while attending Iowa State College, the modern Iowa State coed who needs to earn part of her way through school lives in one of the efficient, well-organized cooperative dormitories on the campus.

Iowa State College has two cooperative dormitories for women students. Cooperate? Yes, the 182 coeds housed in Clara Barton and Alice Freeman Halls prepare and serve their meals, dust and clean, as well as participate in regular college activities.

The idea was first tried on the campus in 1924 when West Gate Cottage was organized with 16 girls and a residence advisor. In 1925 the cottage group was enlarged to 20 girls for whom a full time supervisor was employed. This continued until 1929 when Clara Barton Hall was opened cooperatively under the supervision of the Institution Management Department now headed by Miss Fern Gleiser, and the director of housing, Mrs. Madge McGlade. Mrs. M. A. Perry was instrumental in the reorganization of the established houses.

As popularity of the plan increased Alice Freeman Hall was opened on the cooperative basis in 1932 with Mrs. Ella Gribskov serving as foods director for both halls; residence advisors in each hall took charge of the other activities.

The present foods director is Miss Grace Severance, who is assisted by Miss Ella Gertrude McMullen. The other duties are under the supervision of the hall directors, Mrs. Gladys Simmons and Mrs. Blanche Temple.

The purpose of the cooperative plan is to offer less expensive residence to women who might not otherwise be able to attend college.

The girls in each hall are divided into six committees, five of which are regular while the sixth does special work. Regular committees work in week-long shifts.

Suppose that Jane comes to live in one of the cooperative halls. She moves in just as she would into any other

dormitory and finds her name on a sheet of paper on the bulletin board, under committee one. She discovers that committee one cleans ground and first floors. On a duty sheet posted on the cleaning closet door, Jane finds her name opposite some such duty as "Sweep first floor corridor with the carpet sweeper. Dust all moldings."

The next week Jane is on dinner committee. The menu sheets, made out in the foods director's office, are sent first to the special girls in the store room who weigh and measure out the specified amount of materials for cake, salad, nut bread, or whatever the menu indicates. The sheets then go to the two committee chairmen who assign each preparation to a girl or group of girls. Perhaps the first day she is on dinner, which is Sunday, for committees change on that day, Jane will cut the butter for the several tables and make the coffee required for dinner. She is probably frightened beyond words the first time she serves in the dining room. Each girl on this committee is assigned a table for which she removes plates and service dishes, serves the second course, replenishes beverage glasses, and helps the hostess serve. The dining room looks huge the first time and with a tray of empty plates, it's a long, long trail from the table at the end of the room to the kitchen, but by Saturday night Jane is filling milk glasses like a senior and enjoying it immensely.

THE following week Jane helps clean the second and third floors.

During this week she and some other girls must get up at 6:00 o'clock one morning and wash the tea towels. Very few girls go through their life in a cooperative dormitory without forgetting just once to get up.

Five-forty-five every morning is the program of the next week on breakfast and lunch committee, for at 6:00 a.m. every girl must be in the kitchen to prepare breakfast which is served at 6:45 and lunch which is served at 12:05. After meals each girl on a food committee duty helps clean up. Two

girls scrape dishes, two fill trays for the big dishwasher one of the chairmen operates, one takes the dishes from the trays. How the four driers can make those steaming stacks disappear! Jane may be considerably chagrined, as most of us have been, the day she washes pots and pans when we have had custard in custard cups for lunch. But that's all in the game. After this in the rotation comes the week of rest in which Jane makes up those 40 winks she missed each morning the week before.

Jane had to buy a uniform, for all girls working in the dining rooms and kitchens must have them. Fourteen girls in starched uniforms beside tables spread with fresh white linen make a picture easy to look at.

If she wants to go home or has some other legitimate excuse from working, Jane may secure a girl to substitute for her. All substitutions are reported and must be repaid.

The girls on special committees do the Saturday cleaning, make rolls, pies and other special food, keep the office afternoons, and evenings, help the foods director, and generally keep the house in order.

Work? Disadvantages? Perhaps, but they are few, overwhelmed in number by the advantages. A girl gets experience in living and working with others. The girls have to work together; so why shouldn't they get a real thrill out of doing it? With this attitude the girls do enjoy living in a cooperative hall. Besides learning to associate with people the coeds learn to assume responsibilities they might not otherwise have the opportunity to assume. For instance, if a girl makes the pudding for dinner, it is her responsibility. No one, like mother, takes the blame for a failure. However, the foods director is quite helpful and clever in smoothing out such difficulties. A great many of the girls learn to prepare and manipulate large quantities of food, an experience that may later prove helpful. They learn to accept both authority and criticism, to work efficiently and well.



The Parlor
and Kitchen
of One of Our
Cooperative
Dormitories

